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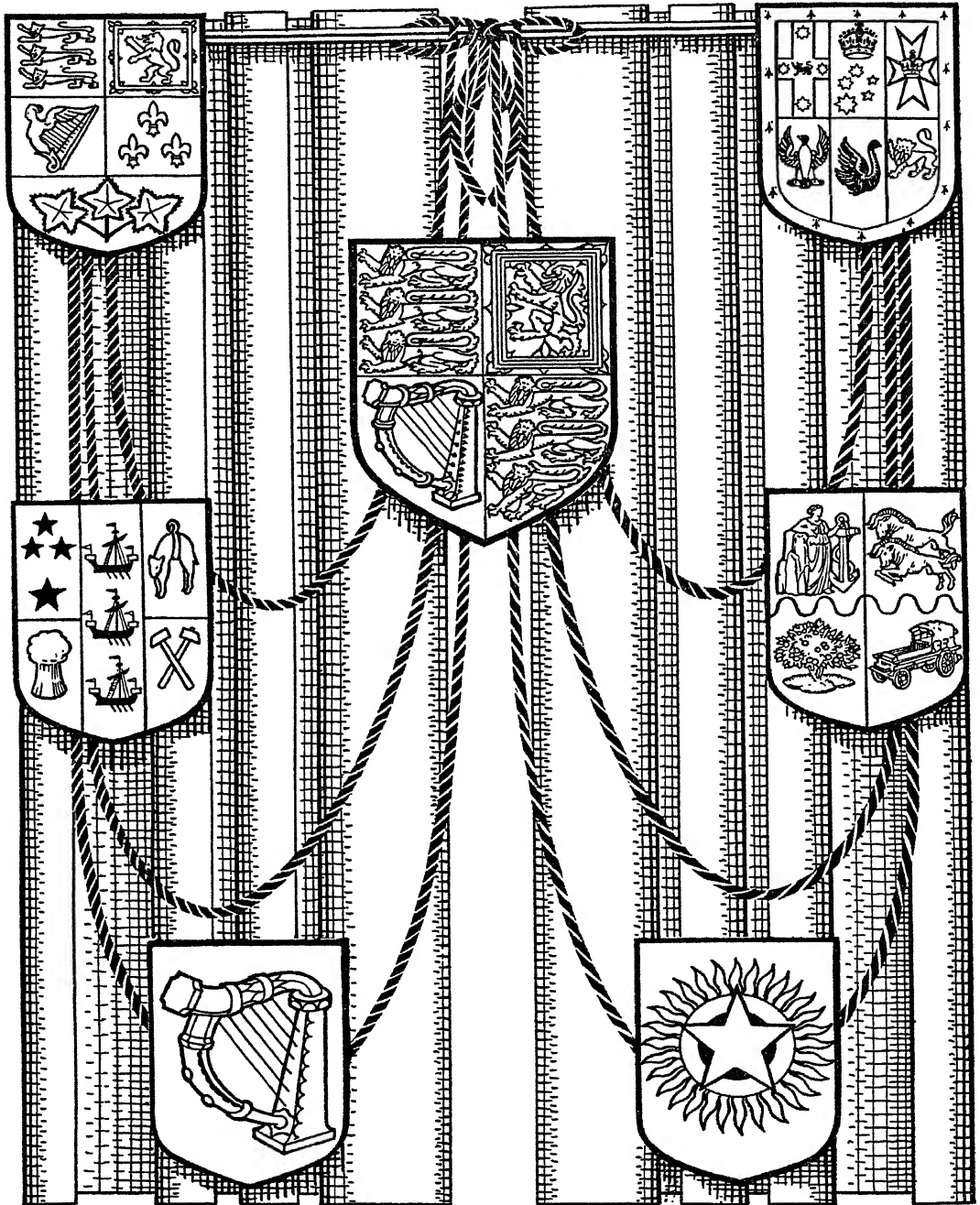
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WESTMINSTER HALL

7 MAY 1937

# The Coronation of Their Majesties



King George VI & Queen Elizabeth

AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURE IN  
WESTMINSTER HALL

FRIDAY 7 MAY 1937

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LUNCHEON  
OF THE

EMPIRE PARLIAMENTARY  
ASSOCIATION

AT WHICH

**H. M. King George VI**

WELCOMED THE  
PRIME MINISTERS AND OTHER DELEGATES

TO THE  
IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

AND THE DELEGATES

TO THE  
EMPIRE PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE



# THE OVERSEA DELEGATES





# THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

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THE HON. E. LAPOINTE, K.C., M.P. (MINISTER OF JUSTICE)  
THE HON. C. A. DUNNING, M.P. (MINISTER OF FINANCE)  
THE HON. IAN A. MACKENZIE, M.P. (MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE)  
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AND OF PUBLIC WORKS)

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COMMERCE OF THE VICEROY'S COUNCIL)

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*accompanied by*

ARTHUR BEAUCHESNE, ESQ., C.M.G., K.C.

(CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS; SEC., DOMINION OF CANADA BRANCH, E.P.A.)

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E. J. HOWARD, ESQ., M.P. (DEPUTY SPEAKER), Leader of the Delegation from May 5

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F. W. SCHRAMM, ESQ., M.P.

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SENATOR THE HON. R. A. KERR (FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE)

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*accompanied by*

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*accompanied by*

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*accompanied by*

MIAN MUHAMMAD RAFI

(SECRETARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY; SEC., BRITISH-INDIA BRANCH, E.P.A.)

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## JAMAICA LEGISLATURE

THE HON. SIR W. MORRISON, M.L.C.

## MAURITIUS LEGISLATURE

DR THE HON. E. LAURENT, M.L.C.

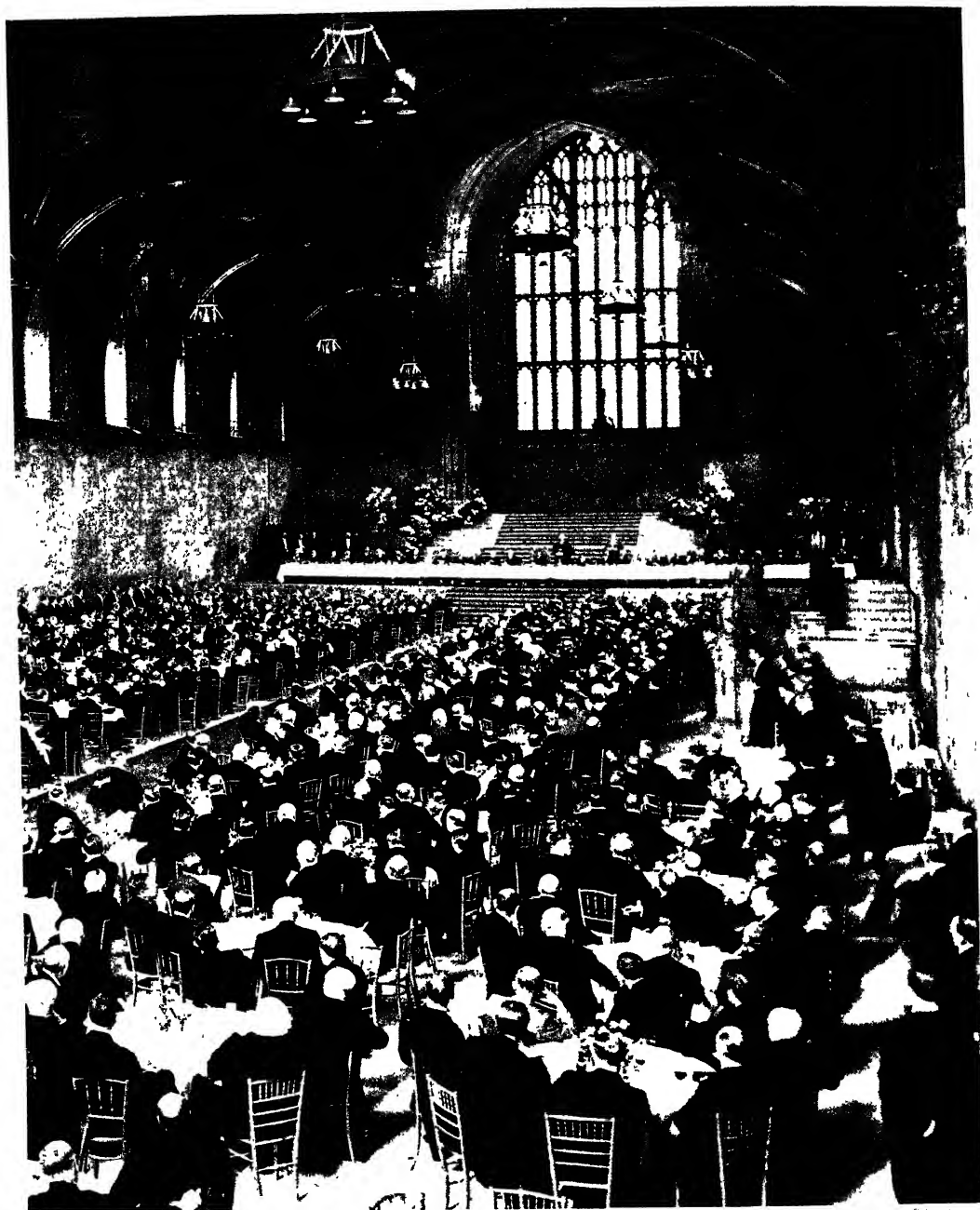
## ISLE OF MAN LEGISLATURE

G. F. CLUCAS, ESQ., C.B.E., M.H.K. (SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS)



THE ARRANGEMENTS  
AND  
ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS





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*The Coronation Luncheon in Westminster Hall 1937*

## DECORATIONS AND SETTING OF THE HALL

The Empire Parliamentary Association, the Branch of which in the Parliament of the United Kingdom has its headquarters in Westminster Hall, was responsible for all arrangements in connection with the function, though the closest co-operation was maintained throughout with His Majesty's Office of Works as the Department responsible for the care and maintenance of Westminster Hall.

The object of the Luncheon was both to enable His Majesty on the eve of his Coronation to welcome the Delegates to the Imperial and Empire Parliamentary Conferences (the former of which was due to begin immediately after the Coronation, while the latter was, at the time of the Luncheon, actually in session), and to enable the Members of all Branches of the Empire Parliamentary Association in the Home and Oversea Legislatures of the Empire to express their loyal duty to His Majesty at the time of his Coronation.

The use of the Hall and its approaches for the purpose of the Luncheon having been granted by the First Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings (the Rt Hon. Earl Stanhope, K.G., D.S.O., M.C.) and the Lord Great Chamberlain (the Earl of Ancaster), it was decided that the High Table, some sixty feet in length, should be placed on the platform between the first and second flights of steps leading up from the body of the Hall towards the War Memorial, at its southern end. In the centre of this High Table was placed the gilt chair, upholstered in crimson silk, which had been obtained from Buckingham Palace for the use of His Majesty; and the other chairs on either side of the seat to be occupied by His Majesty were red leather chairs from the House of Lords, to be occupied by the Prime Ministers of the Empire and others who were leading officers either of the Legislatures of the Empire or connected with the ceremony of the Coronation.

Preparations in the Hall began well in advance of the actual ceremony, and Parliament adjourned on the previous day in order that the Hall might be closed while the final arrangements were completed.

Outside the Hall itself, awnings were stretched from the kerb in Old Palace Yard to St Stephen's Entrance and from the North Door of the Hall to the

edge of the carriage drive in New Palace Yard, these being His Majesty's points of arrival and departure respectively.

As there was no certainty that the weather in early May would be warm, twenty-four gas radiators were placed round the sides of the Hall three or four days beforehand, with the result that a comfortable temperature replaced the normal chilliness of the stone building. A temporary kitchen with six large gas cookers was installed in the north-east corner and enclosed behind wooden partitions painted to conform as nearly as possible with the colour of the walls. The whole of the floor of the Hall and the steps were covered with coconut-matting, and red felt carpets, eight feet in width, extended the whole length of the centre of the Hall and with a width of sixteen feet up the three flights of steps across the platforms, and again with a width of eight feet as far as the kerb outside both entrances.

The oak roof of the Hall was illuminated by a system of flood-lighting which had been installed on the occasion of the Presentation of Loyal Addresses to His Majesty King George V in May 1935.

Only flowers were used for decoration inside the Hall; each of the small tables carried a vase of red and white carnations and blue irises—Coronation colours—and an unbroken line of similar blooms extended from end to end of the High Table. The three flights of steps were flanked at each side with white and blue irises, blue hydrangeas, red and white carnations, tulips and roses. This colour scheme, shown off by the white table cloths and the gleaming silver and cutlery, effectively tempered the normal severity of the grey stone walls and lent to the Hall an atmosphere of dignified festivity that was wholly in keeping with the occasion.

## THE COMPANY AND SEATINGS

At the High Table His Majesty was seated in the centre, having on his right the Lord Chancellor (the Rt Hon. Viscount Hailsham) and on his left the Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom (Capt. the Rt Hon. E. A. FitzRoy, M.P.), these officers being the Joint Presidents of the United Kingdom Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Other guests were seated at the High Table in the following order:

### ON THE RIGHT OF THE LORD CHANCELLOR

The Most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr the Rt Hon. Cosmo Gordon Lang); Major-General the Rt Hon. the Earl of Athlone, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., D.S.O.; the Rt Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, C.M.G.,

M.P., Prime Minister of Canada; His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal; the Rt Hon. M. J. Savage, M.P., Prime Minister of New Zealand; the Rt Hon. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Leader of the Opposition in the United Kingdom; His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.; Senator the Hon. W. E. Foster, Speaker of the Senate, Canada; the Rt Hon. the Marquess of Zetland, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Secretary of State for India; the Hon. Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., President of the Council of State, India; the Rt Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the Rt Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies; the Rt Hon. Walter Elliot, M.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland.

### ON THE LEFT OF THE SPEAKER

The Rt Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; the Rt Hon. Earl Stanhope, K.G., D.S.O., M.C., First Commissioner of Works; the Rt Hon. J. A. Lyons, C.H., M.P., Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia; the Rt Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer; General the Hon. J. B. M. Hertzog, M.P., Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa; the Rt Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., Lord President of the Council; the Rt Hon. P. F. Casgrain, K.C., M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada; the Earl of Ancaster, Lord Great Chamberlain; the Hon. Sir Abdur Rahim, K.C.S.I., M.L.A., President of the Legislative Assembly of India; the Rt Hon. Sir John Simon, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., O.B.E., K.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs; the Hon. G. M. Huggins, F.R.C.S., M.P., Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia; the Rt Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs; the Rt Hon. the Earl of Cromer, G.C.B., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household; the Rt Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bart., C.M.G., M.P., Leader of the Liberal Party in Opposition.

The remainder of the company were seated in the body of the Hall at eighty-eight round tables. The function being of a Parliamentary character, the seating arrangements in the body of the Hall were governed largely by Parliamentary precedence.

Apart from the Ministers at the High Table, His Majesty's Ministers of the United Kingdom and the Dominions and the High Commissioners for the Dominions, India and Southern Rhodesia, the Lord Mayor of London and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, occupied seats in the body of the Hall in the closest possible proximity to the High Table. Privy Councillors who were former Ministers, if Members of either House, had their positions recognised, after which Members of the Lords and Commons and Members of the Upper

and Lower Houses of Dominion Parliaments, the Central Legislature of India, and the Colonial Legislatures, and the Agents-General, were given seats at the various tables so that the Oversea Members could meet as many of the Home Members as possible during the Luncheon.

After accommodation had been provided for the above, seats at the tables were allotted to other guests of the Association, viz.: the principal officers of the Houses of Lords and Commons, the permanent Heads of the Civil Service Departments, former Members of the House of Commons who were Affiliated Members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, the Press, the Chairmen of the Railway, Shipping and Airways Companies which were identified with the work of the Association, and His Majesty's Private Secretaries and those in attendance upon him.

## THE ORDER OF PROCEDURE AT THE CEREMONY

By 12.30 p.m. on 7 May everything was in readiness, with the guests and others at their tables in the Hall. The String Band of the Royal Regiment of Artillery was stationed on the north side of the Members' Entrance and four Trumpeters of the First Life Guards had taken up their position on the platform outside the entrance to the Rooms of the Empire Parliamentary Association.

On the platform between the War Memorial and the top flight of steps there were assembled those who were to receive His Majesty or be presented to him, as well as others who were to support him at the High Table. The Lord Great Chamberlain and the First Commissioner of Works awaited His Majesty's arrival in Old Palace Yard at the opening of the awning leading to St Stephen's Entrance.

At 12.55 p.m. His Majesty, attended by Viscount Gage, Lord-in-Waiting, and by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Piers W. Legh, C.M.G., C.I.E., M.V.O., O.B.E., Equerry-in-Waiting, stepped from his car in Old Palace Yard and was at once received by the Lord Great Chamberlain and the First Commissioner of Works, who accompanied him to St Stephen's Entrance. As His Majesty mounted the steps of St Stephen's Porch, his arrival was announced by a fanfare by the Trumpeters, and at the same moment the Royal Standard was broken at the flagstaff on the Victoria Tower.

On arrival at the platform of St Stephen's Entrance in front of the War Memorial, His Majesty was further received by and shook hands with the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of

South Africa, after which he was received by and shook hands with the Rt Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P. (Chancellor of the Exchequer), the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain.

Sir Howard d'Egville, K.B.E., Secretary of the United Kingdom Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, then made the following presentations to His Majesty, viz.: His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.; the Hon. Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, M.L.A. (Representatives of India at the Imperial Conference); the Hon. G. M. Huggins, F.R.C.S., M.P., Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia; Dr the Hon. Ba Maw, M.H.R., Chief Minister of Burma; the Hon. E. Lapointe, K.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada and Leader of the Dominion of Canada Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; Senator the Hon. W. E. Foster, Speaker of the Senate of Canada, and the Hon. P. F. Casgrain, K.C., M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada (Joint Presidents of the Dominion of Canada Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association); the Hon. N. O. Hipel, M.L.A., Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and President of the Ontario Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association; the Hon. Sir Archdale Parkhill, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister for Defence and Leader of the Australian Commonwealth Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. M. F. Bruxner, D.S.O., M.L.A., Deputy Premier and Minister of Transport of New South Wales and Vice-President of the New South Wales Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association; Mr E. J. Howard, M.P., Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the New Zealand House of Representatives and Leader of the New Zealand Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; Senator the Hon. C. F. Clarkson, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs and of Public Works, Union of South Africa, and Leader of the Union Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; Mr James M. Dillon, T.D., Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Irish Free State, and Leader of the Irish Free State Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; the Hon. Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., President of the Council of State, India, Joint President of the British India Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, and Leader of the British India Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Conference; the Hon. Sir Abdur Rahim, K.C.S.I., M.L.A., President of the Legislative Assembly, India, and Joint President of the British India Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association; the Hon. Mr W. Duraiswamy, M.S.C., Speaker of the Ceylon State Council and President of the Ceylon Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association.

These ceremonies did not occupy more than a few minutes, and when they were over His Majesty moved towards the steps leading down to the High

Table. As he crossed the actual threshold of Westminster Hall, which is about six feet from the top of the steps, the Band played the National Anthem. His Majesty halted facing the Hall, and the whole company stood in silence till the last note had died away.

The First Commissioner of Works, the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom then escorted His Majesty to his seat, and they and the other guests at the High Table took their seats in the order indicated above.

Grace was said by the Archbishop of Canterbury and luncheon was accompanied by a musical programme played by the Band of the Royal Regiment of Artillery under the direction of Lieut. O. W. Geary, M.B.E., A.R.C.M., Director of Music, Royal Artillery.

At the conclusion of luncheon, His Majesty's health was proposed in a short speech by the Lord Chancellor, and the National Anthem, which accompanied the Toast, was sung by the whole company and was followed by three cheers called for by the Lord Chancellor. Further cheering greeted His Majesty when he rose to make his Gracious Reply, and when the cheering at the conclusion of his speech had died down, the expressions of thanks, appreciation, and loyalty were voiced on behalf of His Majesty's subjects both at home and overseas by the Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom and the Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada.

A fanfare by the Trumpeters then announced that His Majesty was about to depart.

The King rose from his seat and, followed by the other guests at the High Table, walked round the end of the table and back to the centre of the steps. The remainder of the company had by then left their tables and lined the broad red-carpeted aisle which had been left clear through the centre of the Hall. As His Majesty walked slowly to the North Door the Band played Ketelby's "A State Procession", and the company bowed as he passed between the tables. When he had reached a point about five yards from the North Door there was a prolonged drum roll followed by the National Anthem. His Majesty halted and stood facing the Hall till the Anthem was finished. He then smiled a final farewell and left by the North Door, entering his car at 2.15 p.m.

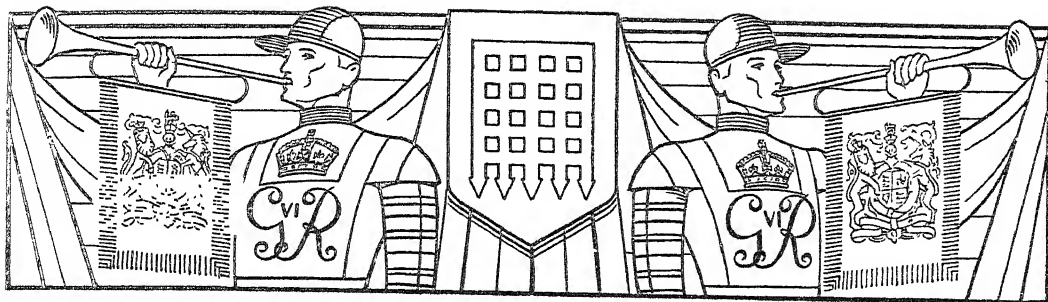
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THE SPEECH OF  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR  
PROPOSING  
HIS MAJESTY'S HEALTH

1







**I**T is my privilege, as Joint President of the United Kingdom Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association, to submit to you the health of His Majesty The King. This is a toast which is honoured in every assembly of British subjects all over the Empire, and normally carries its own commendation with it. But on this occasion we are to have the great privilege of a response from His Majesty in person, and for that reason I am permitted to say a few words in proposing it.

We are met this afternoon as representatives of the free Parliaments of the Empire in Westminster Hall, which was the scene of Simon de Montfort's first Parliament and, therefore, the birthplace of our system of Parliamentary Government. For many years it was the home of the King's Courts and perhaps that is an added reason why I, as head of the legal profession in this country, should have the honour of proposing the toast this afternoon.

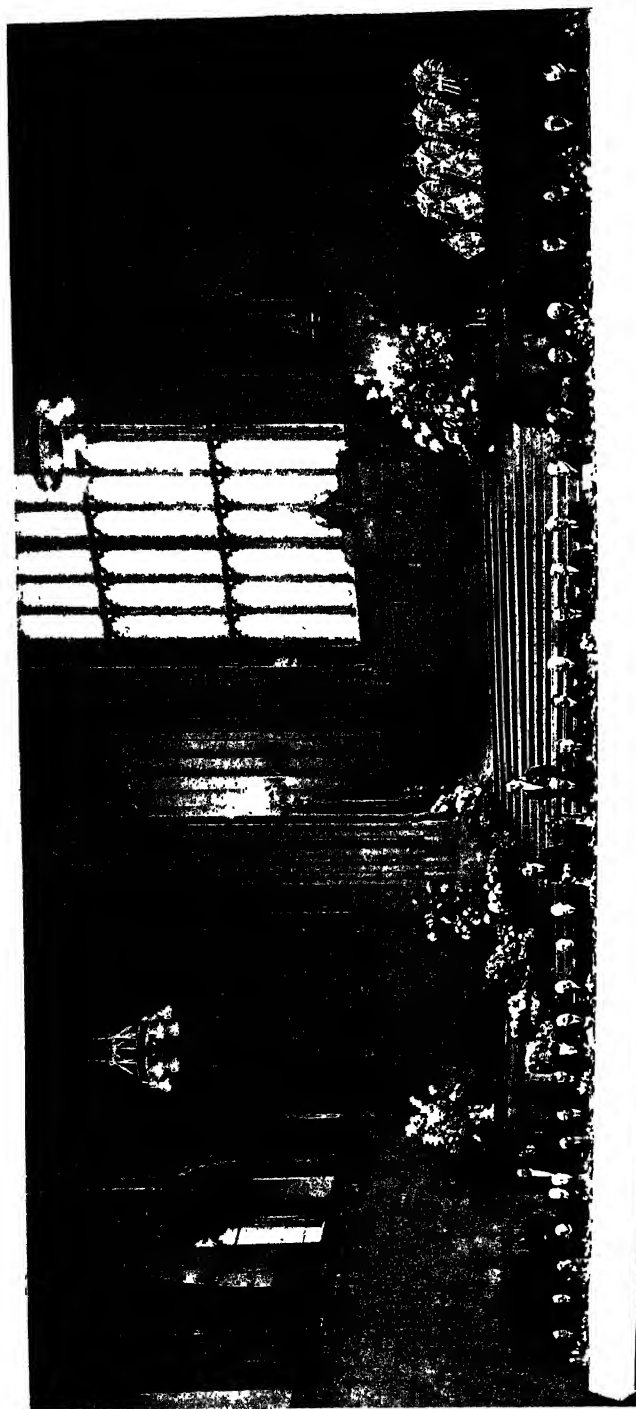
Ever since its erection, Westminster Hall has been the scene of the Coronation Banquet from the reign of King Henry I down to that of King George IV. In the early days the King, who wielded arbitrary power, was wont to summon the chief men of the Kingdom through whom he ruled over some four millions of people. To-day this Coronation luncheon is attended by the representatives not of four millions, but of some four hundred millions, who are not summoned by the King to do his bidding, but who are

freely chosen by the elected representatives of his self-governing peoples.

In the slow progress of the centuries, the Throne to-day has become not the symbol of arbitrary power, but the emblem of our liberty and the connecting link of the free Commonwealths of the Empire. Cradle of parliamentary government, home of justice, scene of countless brilliant gatherings, I doubt whether in all its long history a more representative gathering has ever assembled within the walls of Westminster Hall than that which is met here this afternoon.

It is my privilege to express to You, Sir, the fervent hope of every member of this assembly for a long and happy, peaceful and prosperous reign; in submitting the toast to you, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you to join with me in expressing the prayer which is in the heart of every loyal citizen of the whole Empire—GOD SAVE THE KING.

THE GRACIOUS REPLY  
OF  
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI



Conservative College

University of the South

# *His Majesty King George VI delivering his Gracious Address*



**I** THANK you sincerely for the kind way in which you have drunk My Health.

It is a real pleasure to me to be the guest to-day of the United Kingdom Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association. It also gives me an early opportunity, which I am delighted to have, of welcoming my Prime Ministers and other Ministers from overseas, as well as so many representatives of the several Parliaments of the Empire.

This is an historic occasion. It is the first time that the Sovereign has been present at a Luncheon in Westminster Hall to meet those who represent the Legislatures of the Empire. What worthier setting could be imagined than this ancient Hall, which has been at once the scene and the silent witness of so many stirring events in the history of the Parliament of this country? Here have grown up the principles which form the bulwark of the system known to us as Parliamentary Government. Those principles have been carried by the people of our race to the ends of the earth; they are now the heritage and pride of all parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

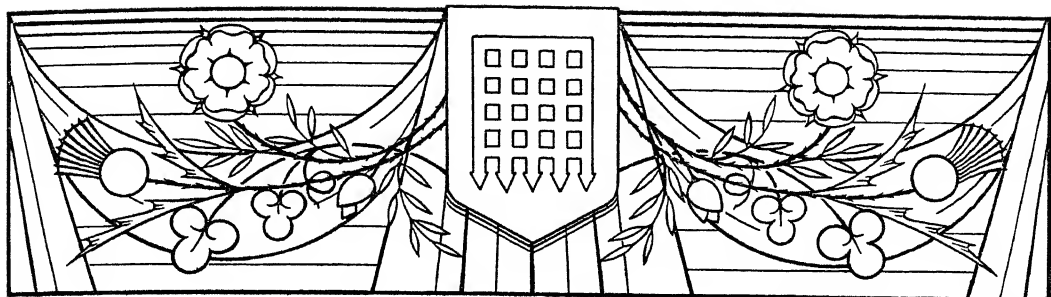
I offer My best wishes for the success of your deliberations. I hope that you will all gain strength and help from meeting one another, and that your stay in this country will be a very happy one.



THE SPEECH OF  
THE SPEAKER OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM  
EXPRESSING THANKS TO HIS MAJESTY  
FOR HIS GRACIOUS SPEECH







**I**RISE to offer Your Majesty on behalf of the Ministers and Delegates of the Empire Parliaments our grateful thanks for Your presence here to-day to welcome us, and for the gracious speech which You have just delivered.

The Lord Chancellor has referred to Westminster Hall. May I be allowed to add to what he has said? I doubt if there is anywhere in the world one building so consecutively and intimately associated over a long term of years with the life and history of a nation as is Westminster Hall with that of the British people. For nearly 900 years these walls have witnessed one historic scene after another. Some of them have been gorgeous. Some have been bright and happy. Some have been pathetic; some have been extremely sad. But I declare that there has been none more symbolical of our Imperial progress than the one which is taking place this afternoon.

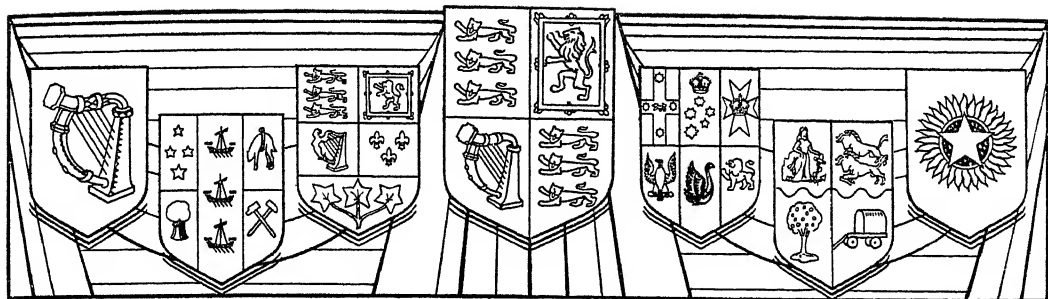
Historic occasions have been numerous, but hitherto on the occasion of Coronation celebrations Kings have met their people in Westminster Hall who have been almost entirely confined to persons within these Islands. To-day, Sir, You have come on the eve of Your Coronation not only as our King and Emperor but You have come also as the head of a family. You have come to welcome representatives from all parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Great Britain, the British Dominions, India, and the Colonies beyond the seas.

Your presence here to-day, Sir, demonstrates more clearly than ever that Your heart beats as one with the peoples over whom You rule. Your Majesty, we have the utmost confidence in the future of Your reign.

These nations which form the British Empire all have Parliaments of their own, some older than others, but all representative democratic Assemblies. Here in this Hall, at the very centre of the Empire, we are in the precincts of what I believe we claim as the Mother of Parliaments, the oldest of them all. I think I am right in saying that every one of them has been framed on the model of the British Parliament. May I therefore, as the Speaker of the British House of Commons, speak for all here on this occasion and say that we thank You for Your presence here to-day, and that we offer You our profound loyalty and our heartfelt wishes for the happiness of Yourself and Your gracious Queen. We express to You our profound hope that You may be spared in the words of our National Anthem, "Long to reign over us".

THE SPEECH OF  
THE SPEAKER OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OF CANADA  
EXPRESSING THANKS TO HIS MAJESTY  
FOR HIS GRACIOUS SPEECH





NO honour could be more prized than that conferred upon me in being asked to voice, on behalf of the Overseas Parliaments of the British Empire, the feelings of all who come from the Dominions in extending to His Majesty, our beloved Sovereign, our sincere and heartfelt thanks for having graced by His presence the Luncheon of the Empire Parliamentary Association.

It is a high privilege to members of the overseas branches of the Empire Parliamentary Association to be so cordially welcomed to England by its members in the United Kingdom. Let me add that it gives us exceptional pride, as well as pleasure, to be received at Westminster Hall. Here in England, we of its several parts are gathered at the very hearthstone of the British Empire, representing the conscience, the sentiments and the ideals of a large and most influential portion of the human race. We are the exponents of principles and hopes common to us all, and without which our horizon would be vastly limited.

The impressive Coronation ceremonies afford to us opportunities not only to exchange views on some of the great problems of the day, but jointly to proclaim principles and ideals which are a cherished part of the great traditions of the British peoples. It enables us as well to guard against "strange creeds" which to-day are abroad in the world, but which are exotic and alien to British ideas.

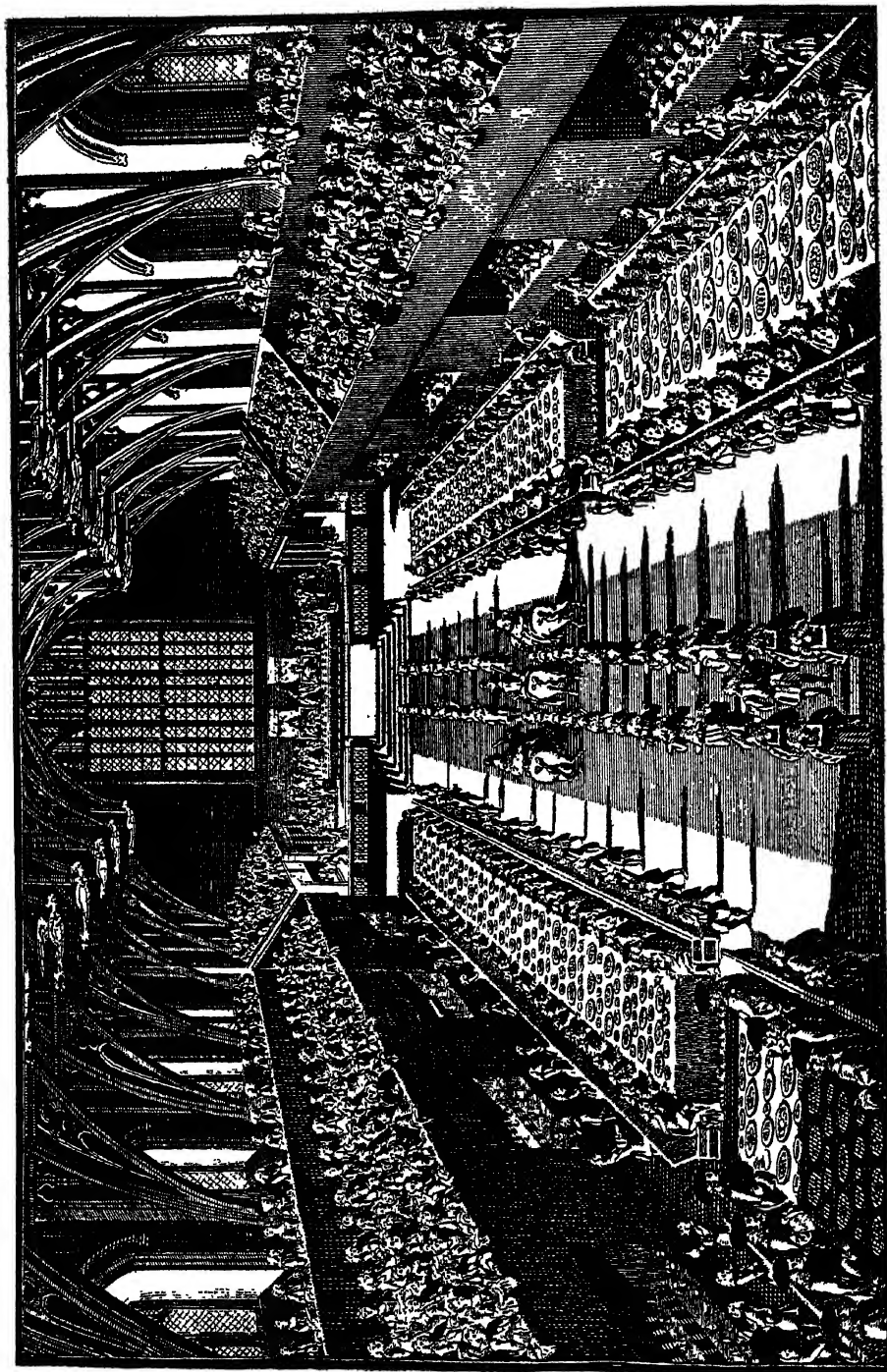
In words recently expressed by Lady Tweedsmuir, the wife of the present Governor-General of Canada:

“The Coronation gives us a focal point for historical meditations. It is in itself a challenge to the world, showing that we, almost alone of all European States, are not afraid of the past, and have not turned our back upon our heritage.”

I join with the Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom in offering to Your Majesty, on behalf of all Your Parliaments overseas, the heartfelt good wishes of their members for Your personal happiness and that of the Queen, and for all that is best in a long and illustrious reign.

## HISTORICAL NOTE





## *The Coronation Banquet of James II in Westminster Hall*

*showing how the King and Queen with the Nobility and others sat at Dinner on the Day of the Coronation, 27 April 1685, and the manner of the Champion's performing the Ceremony of the Challenge*

*Engraved by W. J. Smith*

# CORONATION FEASTS IN WESTMINSTER HALL

“Beneath these rafters of medieval oak, the silent witnesses of historic tragedies and pageants, we celebrate the present under the spell of the past.” The words are those of King George V, spoken in the week of his Silver Jubilee, when he came down to the Great Hall of his Palace of Westminster to receive the loyal congratulations of the Lords and Commons of his Parliament in the United Kingdom. The sentiment of them must be present to the minds of all who share in any of those ceremonies, whether of joy or of grief, which are felt to be so solemn that they require the noblest secular surroundings in the Empire, and so must be carried out in Westminster Hall. Certainly no other scene would have been worthy of the occasion when, for the first time in history, a King of England and of the British Dominions beyond the seas, an Emperor of India, was the guest on 7 May 1937 of a gathering of his subjects jointly representative of all his Parliaments.

This gathering was unmistakably a celebration of the present—and indeed of the future. The parliamentary idea for which it stood is no antiquarian survival, but a living spirit in the actual world, the most productive of ordered happiness of all political creeds now held among mankind, more vigorous in the land of its birth than ever before in its long history, more widely spread about the inhabited globe, and constantly creating after its own likeness new organs of freedom and self-government as the years go by and the younger members of the Commonwealth come to their national maturity. Yet its splendour in the present and its golden hopes for the future could not be worthily celebrated except under the spell of the past. Many nations of Europe have learnt in recent years the bitter lesson that a freedom not rooted in history has no power of resistance to the material hardship and civil dissension of which tyrannies are bred. The liberty enshrined to-day in the parliamentary institutions of the British Empire has a tenacity seasoned by the storms of a thousand years; and that is why it must be celebrated in the oldest shrine of liberty now standing in the world, beneath the medieval rafters of Westminster Hall.

But the gathering of 7 May belongs not only to the general tradition of this home of ordered freedom, of Royalty and Parliament and the Common Law; it takes its place also in a very special succession of great feasts with which the Sovereigns of England have been accustomed to inaugurate their reigns. There is something here that is older even than the rite of Coronation, though that has a recorded history of a thousand years. It is truly primitive, an observance

that goes back through the generations to the earliest forefathers of the English, to Vikings by the fjords of Scandinavia and Teutonic warriors in the dark forests that even Rome could not penetrate. The hall was the centre of the life of the ancient steading, and here, on the death of the chief of the tribe or family, the heir would enter into formal possession of his inheritance, taking his place in the vacant high seat at the head of the table, and feasting solemnly with his household and retainers.

Something of the same symbolism seems to have become embalmed in the religious rite in Westminster Abbey, where the King, having been consecrated with holy oil and invested with the insignia of his office, laden at last with Crown, Sceptres and every emblem of his authority and dedication, ascends the throne and so takes possession of his Kingdom. The Coronation Chair has a different and more mysterious significance, for it is thought that this, and especially the Stone of Destiny in its base, represents the tumulus of the dead king, on which his successor took his seat, that the spirit of his ancestors, which is the life of the tribe, might enter into him. In contrast with the dim gigantic shadows of forgotten mysteries that loom over King Edward's Chair, the high seat in Westminster Hall stands in a clear secular light. It is set only for the head of a family, which happens also to be a nation; although, as many religions testify, where men assemble to share a feast as brethren under the paternal presidency of their chief, the sacramental idea is not far away.

Though the inaugural Banquet must certainly be older than the Coronation, we can glean no details about it until it became associated with the religious rite, and so passed under the influence of the clergy, the only recorders of early history. King Edgar, after his Coronation at Bath in 973, the first of which we have a full account, seems to have sat down to dinner entirely surrounded by bishops and monks, while his Queen held her Banquet separately, in the company of nuns. If the same rather severe society was imposed on the fifteen-year-old King Edwy in 955, it may account for the anecdote that half-way through the feast the King was observed to be missing, and had to be retrieved by St Dunstan from an inner chamber of the Palace, where he was found playing games on the floor with his young bride and other ladies, while the Crown had rolled away into a corner. But by the time we get a fuller view of the Banquet under the Norman kings, it had acquired its final character as a comprehensive assembly of all the magnates of the realm.

The Great Hall was added to the Palace of Westminster by William Rufus, and the lower parts of the walls are those we see to-day; but the wonderful hammer-beam roof is the work of Richard II, nearly three centuries later. The Hall of the Red King, probably divided into three aisles by rows of wooden pillars, was finished in 1099, and the King, wearing his Crown in Westminster

at Whitsuntide according to the custom of his house, gave a great Banquet to inaugurate the Hall. Vast as the building appeared, it was a mere bedchamber, he said, compared with the new hall he already had in contemplation. But next year he lay dead in the New Forest, and his brother Henry held his Coronation Banquet in the Hall.

Probably Henry I conducted his Banquet in much the same form as prevailed down to the time of George IV; but we have no exact knowledge till a later date. When it comes, our main source of information is in the records of the Court of Claims, which adjudicated upon the claims of subjects to participate in the ceremonies of the day. For in feudal England on these great days there was keen contention for the right to perform menial offices for the King, from carrying his Crown in the procession to making spits in his kitchen. Partly this is a manifestation of the sense that service is itself a privilege, which is the faith that has developed the pride of vocation among Parliament men out of the reluctant "suit of court" of the medieval baronage. But legally the right to participate in Coronation ceremonies is associated with the Norman land tenure known as "serjeanty", by virtue of which the tenant in lieu of rent did not serve on the battlefield, like a tenant in chivalry, but instead provided the King with a man to serve about his person in time of peace—such as a cook—or else tendered from time to time a symbolical gift. But on the Coronation day the service would be rendered, or the gift presented, by the tenant in person. It is the conservatism of these old customs, in spite of all social changes, that has so stereotyped the Coronation Banquet that its essentials may be adequately covered in a single description, applicable over a period of at least five hundred years. What follows is based primarily on the records of the Banquet and Court of Claims for Richard II in 1377, when it is clearly recognised that the rites were regulated by tradition already very ancient; and it remains true, with only slight modifications, down to 1821.

On the night preceding the Coronation the King has come in procession from the Tower to Westminster Palace, accompanied by gentlemen whom he has just created Knights of the Bath, and riding bareheaded, that all the people may recognize him as indeed the heir entitled to be crowned. In the morning, having been dressed by the Lord Great Chamberlain (a privileged ministration that Queen Anne violently repudiated), he comes down to the Hall, fasting, because he is to receive Communion in the Abbey. Here the Lords Temporal are awaiting him, and lift him into a marble chair prepared on the King's Bench. This ceremony is believed to come down from the custom of the primitive Teutonic hosts, in which the warriors of the King's immediate circle lifted the heir upon a shield and carried him round the camp to be acclaimed by his men. It preserves in England the Ancient Anglo-Saxon form

of election by the lay nobility, or, in the later phrase, the second estate, before the King-elect is conducted to the Abbey Church, to be accepted by the third estate and consecrated by the first. In the marble chair the King awaits the arrival of the ecclesiastical procession from the Abbey, which now escorts him, with solemn chant, to the place of his anointing.

Meanwhile Westminster Hall is being prepared for the Banquet. At the chief table, at the top of the steps at the southern end by St Stephen's Chapel, canopied thrones are set for the King and Queen. Along each wall are set three tables, end to end. On the King's right they will be occupied, the first by the Lords Spiritual, the Judges, the Barons of the Cinque Ports, the King's antient-serjeant, and the Law Officers of the Crown; the second by the Mayor and Aldermen of London; the third by the Heralds. On the left will be the Lords Temporal, according to their degree. The servants engaged in these preparations are largely the representatives of privileged persons, who are with the King in the Abbey. The Lord of the Manor of Scoulton, in Norfolk, is Chief Lardiner and responsible for providing all the meat required for the Banquet, of course at the King's expense; he will receive what is left over as his fee. Similarly the Chief Butler provides the wine, and will be rewarded with the best gold cup with cover on the King's table, all the wine under the bar of the Hall, and all the pots not of gold or silver that are in the cellar after dinner. This great office has generally been adjudged to the Earl of Arundel (now Duke of Norfolk); but there are other claimants. The Lord of the Manor of Ashley is Napier, and provides the King's table with cloths and napkins, which he retains as his fee; but this office became extinct in the sixteenth century, when the tenure of the Manor was changed from serjeanty to knight service. The Mayors of London and Oxford will assist the Chief Butler in botelry, having since 1236 successfully ousted the citizens of Winchester from that honourable office; and the Lord of the Manor of Addington, or his representative, being the successor in title of Tezelin, the Conqueror's cook, retires to the kitchen on mysterious business of which the nature will shortly become apparent.

At last the King returns from his Coronation. He comes with the utmost of pomp and majesty, with the Crown on his head and the Sceptres (or Sceptre and Orb) in his hands, the golden canopy carried over him by the Barons of the Cinque Ports, and accompanied by the Queen and all the great personages who have participated in the ceremony. He ascends the dais, hands his Sceptres to the Lords privileged to hold them, and while the Lord Great Chamberlain holds the basin, the Cupbearer (who is the Lord of the Manor of Great Wymondley) pours water over the King's hands. The Lord of the Manor of Heydon does service for half his lands by holding the towel. The King having washed,

and the Dean of the Chapels Royal (the Bishop of London) having said grace, the whole company sits down to dinner. From two tiers of packed galleries above them privileged spectators look down, but are not fed.

Meanwhile the Serjeant of the Silver Scullery (an office claimed by the Master of the Horse) has called for the first course. It comes up the broad avenue between the tables with considerable state. In the middle of the procession rides the Lord High Steward of England, first of the great officers of State (the position has been held by Simon de Montfort and by John of Gaunt), with the Lord High Constable and the Earl Marshal, also mounted, on his right and left. The actual dishes are borne by the new Knights of the Bath; and other dignitaries make up an imposing procession. The Lord of the Manor of Addington brings up the rear.

While the King partakes of the first course, the Chief Cupbearer presents a silver-gilt bowl, from which he takes his first draught, handing the bowl to the Cupbearer as fee; and the Lord of the Manor of Addington tenders "a mess of maupygernoun". About the exact composition of this delicacy (and even its name, for it is often inaccurately called "dillegrout") antiquaries are divided. According to some it is a comparatively simple decoction of chicken, heavily spiced with ginger and cloves; but there is a much grimmer recipe, based on hogs' kidneys, and flavoured with ingredients suggesting the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*. It is recorded that Charles II, an exceptionally shrewd king, accepted and examined the mess, but did not partake thereof.

Now comes the most dramatic incident of the feast. With a flourish of trumpets, and preceded by a herald, esquires, and serjeants-at-arms, a group of three horsemen appears at the entrance to the Hall. On the right and left are again the Constable and Marshal; but he in the centre, arrayed in full armour and with red, white and blue plumes in his helmet, is the Lord of the Manor of Scrivelsby, holding that estate by service of acting as Champion to the King. Henry Hillary proved his right to the office in 1327, and transmitted it through his daughter, with the land, to the house of Dymoke, who hold it to this day; but it is believed to have come down from the still more ancient Norman house of Marmion, who may have exercised it on behalf of Duke William before the Conquest. The Herald, standing before the Champion, reads from a paper in his hand:

"If any person, of what degree soever, high or low, shall deny or gainsay our Sovereign Lord — King of England and France and Lord of Ireland, son and next heir unto our Sovereign Lord — the last King deceased, to be right heir to the Imperial Crown of this realm of England, or that he ought not to enjoy the same; here is his Champion, who saith that he lieth, and is a false

traitor, being ready in person to combat with him; and in this quarrel will adventure his life against him, on what day soever shall be appointed."

Thereupon the Champion throws down his gauntlet, which, after lying a little while, is picked up by the Herald and returned to him. He then rides up to the middle of the Hall and repeats the ceremony there, and yet once more at the foot of the dais; after which the King drinks to his Champion from a silver-gilt cup, which he gives him as his fee; and sometimes the Champion has also received, by grace of His Majesty, the horse he rides and the armour he wears, which are the second best in the Royal stables and armoury. If he had to fight, and won, he would obtain these by right; but there is no record that the challenge has ever been accepted, although there is a story, current in several versions, of how Charles Edward, the Jacobite Prince of Wales, attended the Banquet of George III disguised as a woman, picked up the gauntlet, and left his own glove in its place containing a note accepting the challenge and appointing a meeting on the following day.

The King having finished the first course, Garter King of Arms, crowned, and attended by all the Heralds, mounts the dais, and proclaims, first in Latin, then in Norman French, and lastly in English:

"Of the most high, most mighty, and most excellent Monarch, — by the grace of God King of England and France and Lord of Ireland, *Largess*."

This proclamation having been repeated in the middle of the Hall at the far end, the Heralds go to their table and dine, and the second course is brought in, with no less stately ceremony than the first. During it, many more services are rendered. The Lord of the Manor of Nether Bilston presents the King with three maple cups, which he bears in the arms of his family. The King does not keep them long, but hands them over as fee to the Mayor of Oxford for bringing him his second bowl of wine. Another bowl is tendered by the Mayor of London, to accompany a dish of wafers brought by the Lord of the Manor of Liston—no ordinary wafers, as may be judged from the complicated Norman French recipe, including "un pipe de flour, xxx loves de Sugre, xx lb. dalmonds puriple, ii lb. de poudre de ginger, un dimid lb. de saffron pur pastrons, un pipe de Osey, and iii galons doyle".

At last the second course is finished; the ceremony of washing the hands of the King and Queen is repeated; the Clerk of the Closet says grace, the King takes back his Regalia, and the procession reforms and conducts the King to his own chambers in the Palace.

Great and sumptuous as the Banquet was, down to the last of the Stuart

reigns it was kept in its proper place as a subordinate part of the ceremonies of Coronation day. The secular-minded aristocracy of Hanoverian times, however, treated the religious rites with more and more contempt, and as a corollary the Banquet came to be thought of as the more important and interesting event. It assumed gargantuan proportions, and at the same time became more ill-managed and disorderly.

At the Coronation of George III the officials had forgotten to provide thrones for the King and Queen, while the arrangements in the body of the Hall were so defective that there was almost a free fight for seats. The King rebuked the deputy Earl Marshal, who acknowledged his fault, and made the delightful reply that he had taken care that at the *next* Coronation everything should be regulated in the exactest manner possible.

By the next Coronation the Banquet had swollen to greater proportions than ever; but, like a balloon, it was near to bursting point. There were 160 tureens of soup, 7442 lb. of beef, 7133 lb. of mutton, 1730 lb. of bacon, 84 hundred of eggs, and 912 lb. of butter. The wine was on the same or, according to modern ideas, an even ampler scale. Of the 16,000 knives and forks, it is regrettable to find that a very large number were afterwards found to be missing, and have since reappeared as heirlooms in the families of the guests.

This was the end. The cost of George IV's Coronation was estimated at £240,000, and there was an insistent demand for economy. William IV brought down the expenses, in what was called the Half-Crownation, to £43,000; and he did it mainly by abandoning the Banquet. It has never since been held, although claims to perform Banquet services are still presented to the Court of Claims, which has to be separately dispensed on each occasion from considering them. The ghost of the Banquet therefore still survives, and might be reanimated if the powers that be should so desire; but in every Reign the prospect grows more remote. The Champion has resigned himself to the alternative privilege of carrying the Standard of England in the Abbey; and the trustees of the golf club that now owns Addington are believed to have forgotten the art of cooking maupygernoun.

Yet this year's feast, though it differed from the historic ceremony in other features than the austerity of the menu, need not fear to claim a place in the same succession. The velvet and miniver, the shining armour, were missing; but something was present that transcended the greatest of the Banquets of the old régime. With all their splendid apparel and resounding titles, the Constable, the Marshal, the Steward and the Champion could not represent the Imperial Dominion of to-day. They stood for the glory of England, but the Coronation festivities of this age must embody a vaster glory than that. Still, in the immemorial manner, the King feasts among the leaders of his people, but their



leadership can no longer be expressed in terms of fiefs and baronies, but of Dominions and Continents, and for the great men of the Realm of England must be substituted the great men of the representative Assemblies of the nations of the Empire, who assemble together to do honour to their common Sovereign at His Coronation and to take counsel with each other for the common weal.



*1000 copies of this book have been printed at the Cambridge University Press  
for presentation by a Member of Parliament to all those who attended  
the luncheon in Westminster Hall and to colleagues in both  
Houses of Parliament. One copy on vellum has been  
presented by permission to His Majesty*

**King George VI**







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